

**ACTION NOTES OF THE MEETING OF
CASTLE AND PRIORY, ST. JAMES'S AND ST. THOMAS'S
COMMUNITY FORUM**

Tuesday, 28th January, 2014 at 6.30 p.m.
at St. Barnabas Church, Middlepark Road, Russells Hall Estate, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor K. Finch (Chair)
Councillor A. Ahmed (Vice Chair)
Councillors Arshad, K. Ahmed, Ali, M. Aston, A. Finch and Roberts

Officers:-

M. Bowsher (Lead Officer to the Forum) Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services, J. Jablonski (Directorate of Corporate Resources) and A Winning (Chief Executives Directorate);
together with Councillor Foster (Cabinet Member for Regeneration), R. Dugdale (Directorate of the Urban Environment) and 22 members of the public

21. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Following general announcements, the Councillors and Officers introduced themselves.

It was noted that a presentation on Dudley Town Centre Regeneration would be considered as the first substantive item of business.

22. **APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor Waltho.

23. **DUDLEY TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION**

Councillor Foster, Cabinet Member for Regeneration was in attendance for this item and a presentation on aspects of Dudley Town Centre Regeneration was given by Rupert Dugdale. Following the presentation, a number of comments were made by members of the public and responses given by the Cabinet Member and the Cabinet Member for Transport, Councillor K. Ahmed. Principal points made were:-

- the general issue of car parking in the area;

- concern expressed at the number of eating houses in the Town Centre, particularly if they proved not to be profitable and subsequently had to close down;
- the condition of the Street Museum at Stone Street and the need for repair works to be carried out;
- the provision of toilets in the Town Centre, as a result of the works being carried out;
- the number of empty shops in High Street;
- the need for recognised shopping outlets to be provided in the Town Centre;
- concerns about the closure of New Street and the particular problem cited of people, in particular, disabled people, being unable to access Dudley Council Plus to pay bills if they could not use their vehicle;
- concerns raised about the consultation with traders in New Street;

The particular points made would be followed up as appropriate.

24. WORKING WITH YOU - TOPICS RAISED BY LOCAL COUNCILLORS

- Councillor A. Finch raised the issue of potholes and, in response, it was noted that the matters referred to had been dealt with satisfactorily;
- Councillor Roberts referred to the walk-in centre. It was noted that the current contract for the centre ended in September and it was hoped that there was enough evidence to enable a decision to be made as to the future of the centre in due course;

25. LISTENING TO YOU: QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS

Local residents raised questions and made comments, as set out below. These issues will be referred to the relevant Directorate of appropriate body for a response:-

Nature of Question/Comments

- (1) Request for attention to footpaths and kerbs damaged from Broadmeadow down to Russells Hall Road and Middlepark Road sinking through laying of sewage pipes - action requested.
- (2) Gutter by the lamppost in Middlepark Road needs repair as it is filling up after the Council had unblocked it.
- (3) Attention requested to alleged wasted materials for repairs on houses left on site and then thrown away.

- (4) Request for a bin by the bus stop at the bottom of Corbyn Road.
- (5) Request that workmen clear up grass cuttings after work has been carried out.
- (6) Request for yellow lines down one side of Overfield Road, due to problems with parking, especially by Pearce Close.
- (7) Concerns about the litterbin by the bus stop in Overfield Road/ Pearce Close.
- (8) A date for the lighting in Pearce Close to be carried out, requested.
- (9) Request for the drains in Marston Road, Russells Hall to be looked at as they were over-flowing.
- (10) Request for an alternative number to contact someone regarding stray horses, especially at weekends as the number given was an answerphone.
- (11) Concerns about the bus route 222 in that buses were being missed out and were not arriving on a regular basis; or three buses were coming together.
- (12) The issue of the Health Centre moving to Russells Hall Hospital because of parking facilities.
- (13) Concerns about double parking in Ashenhurst Road.
- (14) Concerns over leaves rotting on walkways at the top of Kates Hill and drug use affecting access to bin rooms resulting in tenants having to keep their rubbish in their kitchens.
- (15) Concerns over the operation of a local Tenants' and Residents' Association which the Chair indicated would be looked into.
- (16) Concern about the Town Hall being so expensive that the Salvation Army could not now afford to use the venue for the Christmas Carol Service.
- (17) On-going concerns regarding Blackacre Road. In particular, why 60 people objected to the plan for Blackacre Road and the vast majority of local residents overwhelming rejected the plan and comments made about a further plan that had been introduced together with the effects of shutting Blackacre Road whilst diverting traffic onto smaller, more unsuitable roads. A comment was also made requesting where the 60 people resided.

- (18) Concerns over speeding, particularly in respect of lorries down Overfield Road and Middlepark Road, where the speed limit was 20-30 mph. The Cabinet Member for Transport indicated that he would arrange for this to be looked at.
- (19) Further concerns raised by a member of the public regarding a skid test on Wrens Nest Road raised at the last meeting of the Forum. The Cabinet Member for Transport indicated that he would look further into the matter.
- (20) A request for CCTV cameras in Dudley Library for the safety of the staff and public, given alleged use of the premises by persons under the influence of drugs/alcohol.
- (21) A request that to ease parking congestion in Overfield Road, double yellow lines be put down on both sides; travelling from Middlepark Road entrance place, double yellow lines down as far as the school on the right-hand side and double yellow lines down the left-hand side as far as the flats.
- (22) A request that should parking permits be issued to enable residents to park, the cost of the permit be a small admin charge to cover the Council's costs.
- (23) Concerns over the lack of consultation and information regarding the closure of New Street for Town Centre regeneration.
- (24) A request that the trees be lopped outside a property in Corporation Road as branches were interfering with an elderly persons telephone and television reception.
- (25) A request that the roundabout at the top of Russells Hall Road be looked at as too many accidents were happening at that location.
- (26) Concerns over the zebra crossing being placed so near the island at Coronation Gardens as the concern was that it was an accident waiting to happen.
- (27) A request that the Council consider re-opening New Street and using it as a relief road out of the town as there was enough congestion in the town as it was.

26.

AREA GRANTS

A report of the Lead Officer was submitted on applications for funding. In addition to the three applications contained in the report, consideration was also given to a request for funding from Unit 3 Sixty CIC deferred from consideration at the last meeting of the Forum.

AGREED:-

- (1) That the application received from the Destined to Reign Church be deferred for consideration at a future meeting of the Forum, so to enable further information to be obtained about the Church.
- (2) That the Director of Corporate Resources be recommended to:-
 - approve a grant in the sum of up to £2,536.94 arising from an application received from Dudley Senior Citizens' Forum for funding to purchase a large screen television, DVD player, brackets, installation, delivery charges and one year television licence fees.
 - approve the application received from Priory Park Boxing Club for funding of up to £4,950.00 for the purchase of a new boxing ring in order to realise membership growth and improve facilities envisaged in plans to extend the site.
 - refuse the application received from Unit 3 Sixty CIC for funding towards the provision of a skate park in the borough.

27. DUDLEY COMMUNITY INFORMATION DIRECTORY

The Lead Officer referred to information circulated at the meeting concerning a Dudley Community Information Directory.

28. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting of the Community Forum would be Monday, 17th March, 2014 at a venue to be confirmed.

The meeting ended at 8.00 p.m.

CHAIR